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A 40-foot trailer of MK-82 bombs sits ready for delivery to B-1 Lancer and B-52 Stratofortress aircraft. Munitions experts from Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho; Ellsworth AFB, S.D.; and Barksdale AFB, La., established the largest munitions operation in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Staff Sgt. James Sult) | [High-Res Version of this photo](#)

**'Ammo' provides OEF firepower**

*by Senior Master Sgt. Carlos Tapia  
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**03/11/02 - MOUNTAIN HOME AIR FORCE BASE, Idaho (AFPN)** -- To fight the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan, Air Force officials relied on 154 munitions troops from three different bases to provide the necessary firepower to the Air Force's bomber force.

Nicknamed "Ammo," the munitions experts here and from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., Barksdale AFB, La., established the largest munitions operation in Operation Enduring Freedom, supporting the 28th Air Expeditionary Wing's B-1 Lancer and B-52 Stratofortress bombers, U.S. Central Command officials said.

During the initial build-up of the new "bomb dump," the munitions team downloaded, transported, and processed 3,000 tons of munitions from 100 cargo aircraft such as C-5 Galaxies, Boeing 747s, and Boeing 767s, officials said.

This intricate process of airlifting munitions continues today for resupply of high-value parts from depots in the United

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States to overseas locations.

To sustain operations after the air campaign began, two sealift vessels, the Major Bernard F. Fisher and the Cornhusker State, delivered a combined payload of 7,667 tons of critical, bulk munitions.

Navy and Air Force teams worked together to unload containers from the vessels, unpack the munitions, transport assets to storage sites and return empty containers to the pier. Both airlift and sealift operations proved invaluable to maintain munition stockpiles for the bombers' high operations tempo once the war began, officials said.

To prepare for the air campaign, the ammo team built a 10-day stockpile of 15 munition configurations for B-1 and B-52 bombers. By working around the clock in blistering temperatures, ammo troops delivered bulk components to the bomb pad while assembly crews unpacked components and loaded 2,000-pound bombs on the munitions assembly conveyer.

In assembly-line fashion, the technicians installed fuses, tail assemblies and arming lanyards to convert bulk components into mission-ready weapons. On the offload side of the conveyor, crews loaded the bombs on munition-handling trailers for immediate delivery to staging areas and to the flightline.

For assembly of the smaller MK-82 bomb, forklift operators picked up layers of bombs and loaded them on railed 40-foot trailers. After securing the bombs using an intricate chain-gating system, ammo experts moved the MK-82s to the assembly site.

On Oct. 7, only two weeks after the first ammo experts' arrival, the first eight combat sorties were launched in what was to become a relentless assault against worldwide terrorism. The 28th AEW broke new ground for the heavy bomber's global-reach role, officials said.

By successfully dropping free-fall, satellite-guided and wind-corrected weapons, B-1s and B-52s attacked targets previously reserved for fighter aircraft. The bombers capitalized on superior range and heavy payloads to amass more than 80 percent of the total bombs dropped during the air campaign.

As of March 6, teams have built more than 12,000 GBU-31 Joint Direct Attack Munitions, MK-82 and MK-84 general-purpose bombs, CBU-87 cluster bombs, CBU-103 wind corrected munitions dispenser weapons and M-129 leaflet bombs. (Courtesy of Air Combat Command News Service)

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